

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Bolivia	REPORT NO.	[REDACTED]
SUBJECT	MNR Plans for Strong Anti-Communist Measures at Bolivian Workers' National Congress	DATE DISTR.	11 May 1954
DATE OF INFO.	[REDACTED]	NO. OF PAGES	2 25X1A
PLACE ACQUIRED	[REDACTED]	REQUIREMENT NO.	RD 25X1A
		REFERENCES	[REDACTED]

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1. The recently selected planning committee for the Bolivian Workers' National Congress is composed of the following persons: Juan LECHIN, Nuflo CHAVEZ, Roberto MENDEZ Tejada, and Arturo FORTUN, as government spokesmen; Antonio GASPAS, miner; Antonio CORNEJO, bankworker; Arturo SELAEZ, schoolteacher; Andres ECHAGARAY, graphic worker; and Miguel ALANDIA Pantoja, artist-painter; as the workers' representatives. GASPAS, CORNEJO, and SELAEZ are all members of the Centro de Estudios Paz Estenssoro, a leftist political study group. ALANDIA and ECHAGARAY are leaders of the Trotskyist Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR).
2. In a preliminary report this committee has raised objections to instructions of President Victor PAZ Estenssoro to eliminate the Communists' influence in the labor movement. While the committee is disposed to take action against the Communists, it is at variance with the President as to timing and degree. Committee members recognize that the Communist Party of Bolivia (PCB) is no longer the vanguard of the proletariat, and that there is no further need for working agreements with the PCB. They argue at the same time, however, that the Communists control an estimated 60-70% of the labor movement in the provinces and at least 40% in La Paz. It is further argued that the recent wage increases were not commensurate with salary increases to the white-collar workers or the increased cost of living, and that this places the labor leaders of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) at a tremendous disadvantage in efforts to combat Communist influence in labor. The committee members therefore believe that an anti-Communist campaign at this time might bring about dangerous repercussions in the form of anti-government feeling and propaganda.
3. In spite of these objectives, it appears that the committee will, out of discipline, follow the President's explicit orders to FORTUN, who as head of the Comité Politico of the MNR was instructed to eliminate the Communists' influence in Bolivian labor. As a preliminary step the committee has suggested that representation at the Workers' National Congress be on a proportional basis.

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-2-

This, they feel, will eliminate excessive Communist attendance and insure an MNR voting edge. MNR leaders are prepared to advocate a resolution at the Congress which would outlaw Communist participation in labor matters.¹ Although the MNR leaders expect this action to cause strong repercussions, they feel that it will define the positions of the government and Communists toward one another once and for all, and that the government can withstand any opposition to its anti-Communist policy.

4. While Juan LECHIN is agreeable to the ultimate expulsion of the Communists from the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), he believes that this action should be postponed at least until the congress.² LECHIN fears that a costly division in Bolivian labor would result if the Communists were expelled from the COB before the workers' congress. FORTUN, on the other hand, believes that the government is prepared to take drastic measures to insure government control of the labor situation.

5. At the present time the MNR party controls the labor movement in La Paz, Oruro, and Cochabamba; while the PCB dominates the labor activities in Beni, Potosi, and Tarija. POR labor leaders control Santa Cruz, and Sucre is controlled by the Christian Socialist workers.

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1. Comment. It was previously reported [REDACTED] that the Communists have prepared to form a new labor organization if and when they are expelled from the COB.

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2. Comment. LECHIN has recently changed some of his political views and is no longer a staunch anti-imperialist. As a practical person, he recognizes the need for foreign aid to Bolivia and the fact that this aid can come only from the U. S.

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